

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-25 (cancelled)

26. (original) An electric power steering apparatus including an impact absorbing steering column apparatus provided with a collision energy absorbing device which absorbs energy of a secondary collision of an occupant upon a collision of a vehicle, said impact absorbing steering column apparatus comprising:

an energy absorption quantity adjusting device which changes a secondary collision energy absorption quantity of said collision energy absorbing device;

at least one sensor which detects a condition of the occupant or the vehicle; and

an electric control device which controls a drive of said energy absorption quantity adjusting device based on a result of detection by said sensor.

27. (original) An electric power steering apparatus including an impact absorbing steering column apparatus provided with a collision energy absorbing device which absorbs energy of a secondary collision of an occupant upon a collision of a vehicle, said impact absorbing steering column apparatus comprising:

an energy absorption quantity adjusting device which changes a secondary collision energy absorption quantity of said collision energy absorbing device;

at least one sensor which detects a condition of the occupant or the vehicle; and

an electric control device which controls a drive of said energy absorption quantity adjusting device based on a result of detection by said sensor;

wherein said energy absorption quantity adjusting device is operative to change the absorption quantity of the secondary collision energy by said energy absorbing device among two or more stages, and

wherein energy absorption loads are substantially fixed with respect to progress of a collapse stroke after points of inflection of energy absorbing characteristics in said two or more stages.

28. (original) An electric power steering apparatus including an impact absorbing steering column apparatus provided with a collision energy absorbing device which absorbs energy of a secondary collision of an occupant upon a collision of a vehicle, said impact absorbing steering column apparatus comprising:

an energy absorption quantity adjusting device which changes a secondary collision energy absorption quantity of said collision energy absorbing device;

at least one sensor which detects a condition of the occupant or the vehicle; and

an electric control device which controls a drive of said energy absorption quantity adjusting device based on a result of detection by said sensor;

wherein said energy absorption quantity adjusting device is operative to change the absorption quantity of the secondary collision energy by said energy absorbing device among two or more stages, and

wherein energy absorption loads are gradually increased with respect to progress of a collapse stroke after points of inflection of energy absorbing characteristics in said two or more stages.

29. (original) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 28,

wherein two energy absorption characteristics are exhibited, and

a large load characteristic has a collapse load that is at least twice as large as that of a small load characteristic after points of inflection of the two energy absorption characteristics.

30. (original) An electric power steering apparatus including an impact absorbing steering column apparatus provided with a collision energy absorbing device which absorbs energy of a secondary collision of an occupant upon a collision of a vehicle, said impact absorbing steering column apparatus comprising:

an energy absorption quantity adjusting device which changes a secondary collision energy absorption quantity of said collision energy absorbing device;

at least one sensor which detects a condition of the occupant or the vehicle; and

an electric control device which controls a drive of said energy absorption quantity adjusting device based on a result of detection by said sensor;

wherein said impact absorbing steering column apparatus has a plurality of energy absorption characteristics; and

said energy absorption characteristics delay a rise timing of absorbing the energy.

31. (original) An electric power steering apparatus, comprising:

a collapsible column rotatably supporting a steering shaft and being collapsible with a predetermined collapse load,

said collapsible column including:

an upper column;

a lower column in which the upper column is partially fitted and into which the upper column is displaced when said collapsible column is collapsed,

a collision energy absorbing device provided between the upper column and the lower column to absorb energy of a secondary collision of an occupant upon a collision of a vehicle,

at least one sensor which detects a condition of the occupant or the vehicle,

an electric control device which controls a drive of said energy absorption quantity adjusting device based on a result of detection by said sensor;

wherein said apparatus has a plurality of energy absorption characteristics; and

an electric power assisting unit is fixedly provided to said lower column.

32. (original) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 31,

wherein said energy absorption quantity adjusting device is operative to change the absorption quantity of the secondary collision energy by said energy absorbing device among two or more stages, and

energy absorption loads are substantially fixed with respect to progress of a collapse stroke after points of inflection of energy absorbing characteristics in said two or more stages.

33. (original) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 31,

wherein said energy absorption quantity adjusting device is operative to change the absorption quantity of

the secondary collision energy by said energy absorbing device among two or more stages, and

energy absorption loads are gradually increased with respect to progress of a collapse stroke after points of inflection of energy absorbing characteristics in said two or more stages.

34. (original) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 31,

wherein two energy absorption characteristics are exhibited, and

a large load characteristic has a collapse load that is at least twice as large as that of a small load characteristic after points of inflection of the two energy absorption characteristics.

35. (original) An electric power steering apparatus according to claim 31, further comprising:

an electric control device which controls a drive of said energy absorption quantity adjusting device based on a result of detection by said sensor;

wherein said apparatus has a plurality of energy absorption characteristics; and

an electric power assisting unit is fixedly provided
to said lower column.